(b) If so, the criteria and the procedure, when these were formulated and whether these have been publicised and strictly followed; and

(c) whether the ICCR has any empanelment Committees and if so, the names of the members of these Committees from time to time along their qualification ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) Yes.

(b) Dancers desirous of inclusion in ICCR's 'Reference Panel' must apply on the prescribed form, furnishing the necessary details about their dance training and carrier along with the latest video recordings of their performances. Each application is considered by an Expert Committee on dance which then forwards its unanimous recommendation to the Empanelment Advisory Committee. The Empanelment Advisory Committee then unanimously decides on the inclusion of the applicant in the Reference Panel of dancers of ICCR. This procedure has been strictly followed since 1986.

(c) Yes. The Empanelment Advisory Committee includes performers, experts, critics and scholars as well as people eminent in the cultural field. In order to maintain the impartiality of the empanelment process it has not been found appropriate to publicise the names of the members of the Committee.

Contracts for reconstruction in Iraq

5041. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any initiatives have been taken to secure some major business contracts for India in reconstruction projects in Iraq;

(b) if so, the details thereof, especially for civil works like constructing airports, roads, hospitals and for railway construction works where the country has a major competitive advantage; and

(c) the estimate of the value of the re-construction work in Iraq?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA) : (a) and (b) In view of India's traditional friendship with the Iraqi people, India is keen to participate in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. Indian companies have wide experience of working in Iraq in the 1970s and 1980s in areas such as civil construction, infrastructural projects, industrial rehabilitation and deployment of expert manpower. Different aspects of the situation in Iraq such a humanitarian relief, easing or lifting of sanctions, and a

UN role in facilitating post war political arrangements and reconstruction are currently under discussion among members of the UN. India is engaged in these consultations. It is also understood that some Indian companies are in contact, with companies that have reportedly been awarded reconstruction contracts.

(c) Government is not aware of any accurate estimate of the total value of reconstruction work.

Prime Minister's statement regading Iraq war

5042. SHRI UDAI PRATAP SINGH :

SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has stated in Srinagar that Iraq war is a warning to both India and Pakistan; and

(b) whether it implies that there is direct or indirect U.S. threat to India and Pakistan to negotiate on Kashmir and cross border terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINCH) : (a) The Prime Minister made his remarks in the context of his view that war cannot solve problems.

(b) No.

U.S. pressure on India for negotiations with Pakistan

5043. SHRI UDAI PRATAP SINGH :

SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether U.S. administration is putting pressure on Indian Government to start negotiations with Pakistan on the question of Kashmir;

(b) whether the Prime Minister's offer of talks with Pakistan in Srinagar is a result of this "U.S. initiative"; and

(c) what is response of the Pakistan Government to the Indian offer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) Pakistan's Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali telephoned the Prime Minister on 28 April, 2003 to express appreciation and to thank him for his